



DEMOCRATS
ABROAD

VOTING FROM ABROAD TRAINING

FOR CALLHUB PHONEBANKING AND DEMS ABROAD
HELPDESK VOLUNTEERS

Voting from Abroad

Americans living outside the USA vote from abroad by absentee ballots

Absentee ballots are distributed by the states

Americans living abroad **must submit a voter registration/absentee ballot request for every year** that they want to vote

Democrats Abroad recommends overseas voters go to **VoteFromAbroad.org** to fill out and then print a ballot request form

The signed ballot request form must then be returned to the voter's voting state

Information Voters Need to Complete their Form

Voter identification – driver’s license from the voting state or social security number (SSN)

- While some states require full SSN most ask for the last four digits of the SSN
- If the voter doesn’t have either of these identifications numbers, he/she should write “none” on the form and the state will assign him/her a number for voter registration purposes.

The voter’s **voting address**

- Must be a street address in the U.S. and not a PO box.

The **address where to send the ballot**

- The address to send the ballot to can differ from the voter’s current overseas residential address.
- Many states send ballots electronically (by email or by download from a specified website).



Filling in the ballot request form

VoteFromAbroad.org walks voters through the form prompting the voter to fill in those that are required by their voting state.

There is an “Other Information” field (#9) for the voter to include further information that will help their Local Election Official to process their application.

After the form is filled in, the voter must print, sign and return the form to their Local Election Official in accordance with the instructions that print out with the form.

Special issues for long-time expats

Voters who have been living outside the USA for many years may have trouble remembering their voting address – usually the address of the place they last lived in the US before moving abroad. They can –

- Find an old document, such as a tax return, with the address
- Ask a long-time friend or family member to consult their address book
- Write in a detailed description of the house, street, neighborhood
- Try searching the neighborhood using an internet mapping site like Google maps

Special issues for study-abroad students

Study abroad students may not know where they will be living abroad at the time they fill in the voter registration/ballot request form. They can

- Have the ballot sent to a friend, the study abroad office, or their university abroad
- Study abroad offices will often provide an address for students in the program

Special Issue for those who have never resided in the US

If you are a US citizen but have never resided in the US, you must still provide a US residence street address to use as your “voting address.”

In this situation, use the last US residence of your US parent(s) as your voting address

Deadlines for submitting voting materials

States have separate deadlines for submitting voter registrations (mostly for new voters), absentee ballot requests and voted ballots and rules about how each of these materials can be sent (post, fax or email).

We recommend that “late-comer” voters send the forms even if they suspect they may not arrive before the deadline.

Most states allow you to send in the registration/absentee ballot request form by email or fax (although not always for new voters). Some states permit voted ballots to be faxed or emailed.

Ballots

Ballots must by law be distributed to voters abroad 45 days prior to the election. This year that deadline is 24 September 2016.

All states have the ability to send ballots electronically, assuring their prompt arrival.

Ballots sent by post and ballots requested any time after late September may arrive very close to ballot return deadlines.

Voters should be aware that even though states send ballots electronically, many states will not allow **voted** ballots to be returned that way.

Voting a Write-In Ballot

Voters who don't receive a ballot by the first week of October should vote a Write-In Ballot.

The Federal Write-In Absentee (FWAB) ballot is available to complete and download from VoteFromAbroad.org

Voters who vote a FWAB and then receive their official ballot from their state should also vote and return the official ballot. If both ballots are received by the deadline, the Local Election Official will only count the official ballot.

Voter Assistance

You may encounter voters with problems and questions that are not covered herein.

Complex voting questions should be forwarded to voterhelp@votefromabroad.org

Thank you for volunteering to support Americans abroad to vote in 2016!!

